

REMARKS

Applicants and the undersigned thank Examiner Bomar for carefully reviewing this application. Reconsideration of the present application in light of the above-amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 1-9, 11-19, and 35-43 are pending in this application. Claims 10, 20-34, and 44-53 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Of the still pending claims, claims 1, 11, and 35 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 1, 11, and 35.

Objections to the Drawings

The drawings were objected to for not including reference number 76. Paragraph [0023] has been amended to remove the reference number 76, which was a typographical error in the original application. With the reference number 76 removed from the specification, amendments to the drawings are not necessary. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Objections to the Specification

The disclosure was objected to for containing blanks in the place of serial numbers. Paragraphs [0030], [0040], and [0041] have been amended to fill in the serial numbers corresponding to the attorney docket numbers contained in those paragraphs. Paragraph [0002] has been deleted. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

Claim 35 was objected to for an informality. Claim 35 has been amended to include the letter --A-- at the beginning of the preamble. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 8, 9, 18, 19, 42, and 43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 8, 18, and 42 have been amended to recite that the first tubular member is reconnected to the third tubular member. In view of these amendments, claims 8, 18, and 42 comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

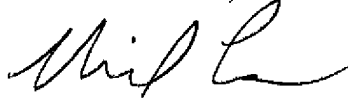
Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-9, 11-19, and 35-43 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Taylor (U.S. Patent No. 5,787,981). Claims 1, 11, and 35 have been amended to include the subject matter of claims 10, 20, and 44, respectively, which were found to be allowable by the Examiner. Accordingly, claims 1, 11, and 35 are in condition for allowance. Dependent claims are allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

Applicants believe all matters in the Office Action dated June 5, 2008 have been addressed. It is believed that no extensions of time or fees are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136(a), and any fees required (including fees for net addition of claims) are hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account Number 03-2769 (2725-26205).

Respectfully submitted,
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